



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

COPY MAILED

JUN 22 2009

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

JOSEPH H. MCGLYNN
6111 SADDLE HORN DR.
FAIRFAX, VA 22030

In re Application of :
Yvonne F. Bell :
Application No. 09/774,807 : **DECISION ON PETITION**
Filed: February 1, 2001 :
Attorney Docket No. JHM810 :

This is a decision on the petition under the unintentional provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b), filed May 12, 2009, to revive the above-identified application.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b)." This is not a final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 704.

The above-identified application became abandoned for failure to reply in a timely manner to the non-final Office action mailed August 24, 2005, which set a shortened statutory period for reply of three (3) months. No extension of time under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a) were obtained. Accordingly, the above-identified application became abandoned on November 25, 2005.

A petition to revive cannot be granted where there is an outstanding requirement. In the instant case, there was no response to the August 24, 2005 Office action. A courtesy copy of this Office action is being mailed with this decision. Accordingly, the petition to revive cannot be treated until the response to the Office action is received.

A grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by: (1) the required reply, unless previously filed; (2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m); (3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional; and (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required by 37 CFR 1.137(d). Where there is

a question as to whether either the abandonment or the delay in filing a petition under 37 CFR 1.137 was unintentional, the Director may require additional information. See MPEP 711.03(c)(II)(C) and (D). The instant petition lack items (3).

There are three periods to be considered during the evaluation of a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b):

- (1) the delay in reply that originally resulted in the abandonment;
- (2) the delay in filing an initial petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) to revive the application; and
- (3) the delay in filing a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) to revive the application.

Currently, the delay has not been shown to the satisfaction of the Director to be unintentional for periods (1) and (2).

As to Period (1):

The patent statute at 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) authorizes the Director to revive an "unintentionally abandoned application." The legislative history of Public Law 97-247 reveals that the purpose of 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) is to permit the Office to have more discretion than in 35 U.S.C. §§ 133 or 151 to revive abandoned applications in appropriate circumstances, but places a limit on this discretion, stating that "[u]nder this section a petition accompanied by either a fee of \$500 or a fee of \$50 would not be granted where the abandonment or the failure to pay the fee for issuing the patent was intentional as opposed to being unintentional or unavoidable." See H.R. Rep. No. 542, 97th Cong., 2d Sess. 6-7 (1982), reprinted in 1982 U.S.C.C.A.N. 770-71. The revival of an intentionally abandoned application is antithetical to the meaning and intent of the statute and regulation.

35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) authorizes the Director to accept a petition "for the revival of an unintentionally abandoned application for a patent." As amended December 1, 1997, 37 CFR 1.137(b)(3) provides that a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by a statement that the delay was unintentional, but provides that "[t]he Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional." Where, as here, there is a question whether the initial delay was unintentional, the petitioner must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unintentional within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) and 37 CFR 1.137(b). See In re Application of G, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989); 37 CFR 1.137(b). Here, in view of the inordinate delay (3 years) in resuming

prosecution, there is a question whether the entire delay was unintentional. Petitioner should note that the issue is not whether some of the delay was unintentional by any party; rather, the issue is whether the entire delay has been shown to the satisfaction of the Director to be unintentional.

The question under 37 CFR 1.137(b) for period (1) is whether the delay on the part of the party having the right or authority to reply to avoid abandonment (or not reply) was unintentional. Accordingly, any renewed petition must clearly identify the party having the right to reply to avoid abandonment on November 25, 2005. That party, in turn must explain what effort(s) was made to further reply to the outstanding Office action and, further, why no reply was filed. If no effort was made to further reply, then that party must explain why the delay in this application does not result from a deliberate course of action (or inaction). Likewise, as Joseph McGlynn was counsel of record at the time of abandonment, Joseph McGlynn should explain why this application became abandoned while it was under his control and what efforts he made to further reply of itself and with whom this matter was discussed outside of Mr. McGlynn. Copies of any correspondence relating to the filing, or to not filing a further reply to the outstanding Office action are required from responsible person(s), Joseph McGlynn and whoever else was involved with this application at the time of abandonment. Statements are required from any and all persons responsible for handling this application, and the responsible person(s) having firsthand knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the lack of a reply to the outstanding Office action. As the courts have made clear, it is pointless for the USPTO to revive a long abandoned application without an adequate showing that the delay did not result from a deliberate course of action. See Lawman Armor v. Simon, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 10843, 74 USPQ2d 1633 (DC EMich 2005); Field Hybrids, LLC v. Toyota Motor Corp., 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 1159 (D. Minn Jan. 27, 2005); Lumenyte Int'l Corp. v. Cable Lite Corp., Nos. 96-1011, 96-1077, 1996 U.S. App. LEXIS 16400, 1996 WL 383927 (Fed. Cir. July 9, 1996) (unpublished) (patents held unenforceable due to a finding of inequitable conduct in submitting an inappropriate statement that the abandonment was unintentional).

As to Period (2):

Likewise, where the applicant deliberately chooses not to seek or persist in seeking the revival of an abandoned application, or where the applicant deliberately chooses to delay seeking the revival of an abandoned application, the resulting delay in seeking revival of the abandoned application cannot be considered as "unintentional" within the meaning of 37 CFR 1.137(b). See MPEP 711.03(c).

The language of both 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) and 37 CFR 1.137(b) are clear and unambiguous, and, furthermore, without qualification. That is, the delay in filing the reply during prosecution, as well as in filing the petition seeking revival, must have been, without qualification, "unintentional" for the reply to now be accepted on petition. The Office requires that the entire delay be at least unintentional as a prerequisite to revival of an abandoned application to prevent abuse and injury to the public. See H.R. Rep. No. 542, 97th Cong., 2d Sess. 7 (1982), reprinted in 1982 U.S.C.C.A.N. 771 ("[i]n order to prevent abuse and injury to the public the Commissioner . . . could require applicants to act promptly after becoming aware of the abandonment"). The

December 1997 change to 37 CFR 1.137 did not create any new right to overcome an intentional delay in seeking revival, or in renewing an attempt at seeking revival, of an abandoned application. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. 53131, 53160 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 63, 87 (October 21, 1997), which clearly stated that any protracted delay (here, over 3 years) could trigger, as here, a request for additional information. As the courts have since made clear, a protracted delay in seeking revival, as here, requires a petitioner's detailed explanation seeking to excuse the delay as opposed to USPTO acceptance of a general allegation of unintentional delay. See Lawman Armor v. Simon, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 10843, 74 USPQ2d 1633, at 1637-8 (DC EMich 2005); Field Hybrids, LLC v. Toyota Motor Corp., 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 1159 (D. Minn Jan. 27, 2005) at *21-*23. Statements are required from any and all persons handling this application and the responsible person(s) having firsthand knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the protracted delay, after the abandonment date, in seeking revival.

As noted in MPEP 711.03(c)(II), subsection D, in instances in which such petition was not filed within 1 year of the date of abandonment of the application, applicants should include:

- (A) the date that the applicant first became aware of the abandonment of the application; and
- (B) a showing as to how the delay in discovering the abandoned status of the application occurred despite the exercise of due care or diligence on the part of the applicant.

In either instance, applicant's failure to carry the burden of proof to establish that the "entire" delay was "unavoidable" or "unintentional" may lead to the denial of a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b), regardless of the circumstances that originally resulted in the abandonment of the application. See also New York University v. Autodesk, 2007 U.S. DIST LEXIS, U.S. District LEXIS 50832, *10 -*12 (S.D.N.Y. 2007)(protracted delay in seeking revival undercuts assertion of unintentional delay).

The file does not indicate a change of address has been submitted, although the address given on the petition differs from the address of record. If appropriate, a change of address should be filed in accordance with MPEP 601.03. A courtesy copy of this decision is being mailed to the address given on the petition; however, the Office will mail all future correspondence solely to the address of record.

Any renewed petition may be addressed as follows:

By Mail: Mail Stop PETITION
 Commissioner for Patents
 P. O. Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By hand: U. S. Patent and Trademark Office
 Customer Service Window, Mail Stop Petitions
 Randolph Building

401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

The centralized facsimile number is (571) 273-8300.

Correspondence regarding this decision may also be filed through the electronic filing system of the USPTO.

To expedite consideration, petitioner may wish to contact the undersigned regarding the filing of the renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b).

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3210.



Irvin Dingle
Petitions Examiner
Office of Petitions

cc: Donald Moyer
1130 S. Michigan #2015
Chicago, IL 60605

Attachment: courtesy copy of the Office action mailed August 24, 2005



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/774,807	02/01/2001	Yvonne F. Bell	JHM810	2614

7590 08/24/2005
Joseph H. McGlynn
6111 Saddle Horn Dr.
Fairfax, VA 22030

EXAMINER

GILLIGAN, CHRISTOPHER L

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3626

DATE MAILED: 08/24/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/774,807

Applicant(s)

BELL, YVONNE F.

Examiner

Luke Gilligan

Art Unit

3626

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 May 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

Response to Amendment

1. In the amendment filed 5/19/05, the following has occurred: claims 1, 3, and 5 have been amended. Now, claims 1-5 are presented for examination.
2. The rejections under 35 U.S.C. 101 have been withdrawn by the Examiner based on changes made by Applicant to the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Arbuckle, U.S. Patent No. 5,651,117 in view of PR Newswire, New York State Relies on Sybase to Simplify and Streamline Processing of Death Certificates (hereinafter EDRS, paragraphs numbered by Examiner) and further in view of Perry et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,241,466.
5. As per claim 1, Arbuckle teaches a computer network system used to inform concerned entities that a person has died comprising: various sources which transmit a death notice to a funeral home informing the funeral home of the death of a patient (see column 6, lines 16-22); a funeral home to receive the death notice from the sources, said funeral home being linked by a computer network to concerned entities (see column 8, lines 45-48, note that in some embodiments, the depository is also the funeral home, see column 3, lines 29-35); said concerned entities being linked to said computer network of the funeral home to receive the death notice (see column 8, line 64 – column 9, line 7).

Art Unit: 3626

6. Although Arbuckle teaches that death notices can be received from special sources that include any domain agreed upon to be monitored (see column 6, lines 41-44), the references does not explicitly teach that the special sources include a patient care facility. However, EDRS discloses electronic submission of death notices by a patient care facility (see paragraph 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include this domain to be monitored into the system of Arbuckle. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to incorporate this feature for the purpose of enhancing the ability to assure timely notice of a given death by broadening the domains to be monitored (see column 1, lines 52-55 of Arbuckle).

7. Although Arbuckle is directed to informing any contracting customer of a given death, the reference does not explicitly identify an insurance company nor the Social Security Administration as a contracting customer. However, Perry teaches a centralized system that monitors death notifications and links concerned entities including the an insurance company and the Social Security Administration (see column 2, lines 31-36 and column 4, lines 50-67). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to understand that any type of concerned entity can contract with the depository of Arbuckle. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to includes these examples of concerned entities for the purpose of providing a higher degree of assurance that entities that require notification of death be informed of particular deaths (see column 3, lines 10-14 of Arbuckle).

8. As per claim 2, Arbuckle in view of EDRS and Perry teach the system of claim 1 as described above. Arbuckle further teaches said concerned entities linked to the computer network and the funeral home also include a government entity charged with maintaining vital statistics within a community including deaths (see column 6, lines 25-34).

Art Unit: 3626

9. As per claim 3, Arbuckle in view of EDRS and Perry teach the system of claim 2 as described above. Arbuckle further teaches said monitored sources are linked to said funeral home by a digital transmitting medium and hardware capable of transmitting a digital signal from the sources which can be received by the funeral home (see Figure 1).

10. As per claim 4, Arbuckle in view of EDRS and Perry teach the system of claim 3 as described above. Arbuckle does not explicitly teach including a pension plan administration office linked to said funeral home through the computer network to receive and transmit digital signals. Perry teaches a pension plan administration office linked to said centralized system through the computer network to receive and transmit digital signals (see column 2, lines 31-36). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to understand that any type of concerned entity can contract with the depository of Arbuckle for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

11. Claim 5 recites substantially similar method limitations to system claim 1 and, as such, is rejected for similar reasons as given above.

Response to Arguments

12. In the remarks filed 5/19/05, Applicant argues in substance that the EDRS reference fails to teach certain features recited in the claims. It is respectfully submitted these arguments have been fully considered but are now moot in view of the new grounds of rejection in view of Arbuckle as detailed above.

Conclusion

13. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Art Unit: 3626

- Wilson teaches electronic death notification that includes communication between a patient care facility and a funeral home.

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Luke Gilligan whose telephone number is (571) 272-6770. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8am-5:30pm.

15. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Thomas can be reached on (571) 272-6776. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

16. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

8/22/05


C. Luke Gilligan
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3626